

# ROMANIA GOTHICA II

## THE FRONTIER WORLD

### ROMANS, BARBARIANS AND MILITARY CULTURE



Proceedings of the International Conference  
at the Eötvös Loránd University  
(Budapest, 1-2 October 2010)

**TIVADAR VIDA (ed.)**

Budapest 2015

## **Romania Gothica II**

### The Frontier World

Romans, Barbarians and Military Culture

## The Romania Gothica Conference

*Organising Committee:*

Isabella Baldini (Bologna), Salvatore Cosentino (Ravenna), Cristina Delaplace  
(Toulouse), Joan Pinar Gil (Barcelona), Tivadar Vida (Budapest)

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Front cover

Diptych of Stilicho as *magister militum* in *chlamys* with *tunica*

Museo del Duomo e Biblioteca Capitolare, Monza

Back cover

Stilicho's sword with inlaid gemstone

(István Bóna: *Das Hunnenreich*. Corvina – Konrad Theiss Verlag:

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# ROMANIA GOTHICA

## The Origins of European Identity

16<sup>th</sup> Centenary of Ataulf's Rise as King of the Goths

RAVENNA

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By the early 5<sup>th</sup> century, the importance of the so-called "barbarians" in the various spheres of public and private life appears to grow unstoppably. Described with apocalyptic tones by many sources, the phenomenon is just one among many elements characterising a comprehensive process of transformation of the Mediterranean and European worlds.

Soldier in Pannonia, king in Italy, Gaul and Spain, husband to the future empress Galla Placidia: Ataulf's vicissitudes and his ephemeral kingship (410-415) can be regarded as an eloquent paradigm of these times, characterised both by the transformation of the geography of power and an extraordinary mobility of people, objects and ideas in a growingly multicultural scenario. Tradition attributes to him the will of preserving the civilised *Romania* instead of replacing it by a *Gothia* based on strictly barbarian traditions. The conflict and the following osmosis of Roman and barbarian cultural elements will become indubitably one of the bases for Europe's future identity.

With occasion of the 1600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ataulf's rise to power, the Universities of Bologna, Eötvös Loránd of Budapest and Toulouse-II Le Mirail and Aredat (Association for Research, Study and Diffusion on Late Antiquity) have decided to organize an international conference to be held in four seats (Ravenna, Budapest, Toulouse and Barcelona). More than seventy researchers coming from fifteen countries will gather with the common aim of discussing the importance of Roman-barbarian cultural interaction during the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century in a political, military, social and urban background.

### Ravenna, 24 – 25 settembre 2010 - ROMANIA GOTHICA I

Nell'ambito del progetto Romania Gothica (evento come finalità la discussione, sotto diverse prospettive, dei grandi problemi legati all'interazione socio-culturale tra il mondo romano e le cosiddette civiltà barbariche nella prima metà del V secolo), il colloquio ravennate "Potere e politica nell'età della famiglia teodosiana (395-455). I linguaggi dell'impero, le identità dei barbari" intende porre l'attenzione sugli aspetti legati all'esercizio del potere e alle sue manifestazioni rituali, sociali, militari, economiche, architettoniche e materiali.

Tali rilevanti questioni verranno analizzate da storici e archeologi provenienti da diversi luoghi d'Europa, nel quadro di un evento che permetterà di presentare gli ultimi sviluppi delle ricerche in corso. In aggiunta alle relazioni sui temi centrali del convegno, è prevista una "mappa sensibile" di siti e aspetti archeologici che valorizza il confronto tra le diverse realtà regionali italiane nell'arco dello stesso orizzonte cronologico del convegno.

### Budapest, 1 – 2 October 2010 - ROMANIA GOTHICA II

Barbarians had infiltrated from the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D. in both military and civil life of the Roman Empire. In such context, the Danubian frontier zone played a determining role in the transition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages in the whole Europe.

The Budapest session of the Romania Gothica Conference Project will examine the problem of the dialogue between the Roman and the barbarian cultural identities, as well as the interaction in the society and in the military culture in the end of 4<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century. The conference will make available the most recent results of both historical and archaeological research.

### Toulouse, 29 – 30 octobre 2010 - ROMANIA GOTHICA III

Dans le cadre de « Romania Gothica », le colloque de Toulouse permettra de présenter les recherches les plus récentes et les plus novatrices des historiens actuels concernant l'histoire des Goths au V<sup>e</sup> siècle et plus généralement l'histoire des contacts entre les différents peuples barbares et les élites d'Occident aux V<sup>e</sup> et VI<sup>e</sup> siècles. Ces contacts, faits de rapprochements politiques et sociaux, mais également de mise en valeur symbolique des différences et des emprunts entre ces noblesses antiques et nouvelles, romaines et barbares, sont au cœur de la réflexion actuelle sur les continuités entre la fin de l'Empire romain et le Haut-Moyen-Age en Occident.

### Barcelona, 12 - 13 novembre 2010 - ROMANIA GOTHICA IV

En el imaginario colectivo de la Antigüedad, pocos conceptos parecen más antagónicos que el salvaje bárbaro y la civilizada vida urbana. A pesar de ello, las grandes ciudades del Mediterráneo fueron siempre focos de atracción para numerosas personas de origen bárbaro. En el siglo V, en plena efervescencia de actividad de las gentes y con la construcción de los primeros reinos en Occidente, la ciudad deviene uno de los escenarios principales de los procesos de transformación política, social, cultural e ideológica de la época.

Dentro del proyecto Romania Gothica, la reunión de Barcelona se presenta como un foro de debate en el que historiadores, arqueólogos y filólogos discutirán las líneas maestras de la interacción entre romanos y bárbaros en ámbito urbano y de sus consecuencias para el desarrollo histórico de las ciudades de Occidente.

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# MANIAKION – THE GOLDEN TORC IN THE LATE ROMAN AND EARLY BYZANTINE ARMY

## Preliminary Research Report

Zsolt Mráv

The torc or *maniakion* has been the subject of several studies yielding different conclusions, but it is generally accepted that it was introduced to the Roman army by the Gauls and Persians. The Romans adopted the torc, but progressively gave it a more specific significance as a military decoration and then as a mark of office. In the army of the Principate the torc had been worn by allied and then auxiliary soldiers around the neck,<sup>1</sup> like the “guerrier de Vachères”,<sup>2</sup> or as a military decoration, awarded normally in pairs and – in contrast with the barbarian fashion – attached to armour.<sup>3</sup> In the early 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the traditional system of *dona militaria* was replaced by the cash *praemium*.<sup>4</sup> The only decoration reintroduced in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century was the torc, known from inscriptions of *milites torquati* dated to this period.<sup>5</sup> Vegetius listed them among the *principales*, as an established rank (Veget. 2,7).<sup>6</sup> In the late Roman army this type of *dona militaria* was still awarded for bravery, as clearly attested by Prudentius’ *Peristephanon* (1, 64), composed around A.D. 400.<sup>7</sup> Late Roman standard-bearers and guardsmen also wore torcs, as demonstrated by many items of literary and iconographical evidence.<sup>8</sup> According to M. P. Speidel, the *aureos torques* in the late Roman period may not have been a unique privilege of standard-bearers, mainly *draconarii*,<sup>9</sup> but also of the emperors’ guardsmen. These soldiers were chosen from among those who had already received the torc as a reward for their bravery (Fig. 1).<sup>10</sup>

Although many scholars have discussed the role and function of torcs from different points of view (for instance in connection with the iconography of warrior saints<sup>11</sup> and guardsmen,<sup>12</sup> as military decoration<sup>13</sup> or “Torqueskrönung”<sup>14</sup>), they based their conclusions on literary sources and only selec-



Fig. 1. Missorium of Theodosius (Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia), guardsmen (after GRÜNHAGEN 1954)

<sup>1</sup> BECK–CHEW 1991, 68–69.

<sup>2</sup> ESPÉRANDIEU 1907, 38 n. 35; BARRUOL 1996, 1–12; ADLER 2003, 353–354 (with further literature).

<sup>3</sup> MAXFIELD 1981, 86–88; ADLER 2003, 131–137, 210–213.

<sup>4</sup> MAXFIELD 1981, 248–254; SPEIDEL 1996, 235.

<sup>5</sup> WESCH-KLEIN 1994, 126–127; SPEIDEL 1996, 236.

<sup>6</sup> WESCH-KLEIN 1994, 126–127; SPEIDEL 1996, 236.

<sup>7</sup> SPEIDEL 1985, 285; WESCH-KLEIN 1994, 128 Anm. 50; SPEIDEL 1997, 295–299.

<sup>8</sup> MAXFIELD 1981, 252–253; SPEIDEL 1985, 284–286.

<sup>9</sup> Amm. 20, 4, 18; Prudentius, *Peristephanon* 1.33–35 – cf. SPEIDEL 1985, 283–287; SPEIDEL 1996, 237; WALTER 2001, 182.

<sup>10</sup> SPEIDEL 1996, 237–238.

<sup>11</sup> WALTER 2001; WALTER 2003, 153–155; GROTHOWSKI 2009, 294–300.

<sup>12</sup> FRANK 1969, 139; SPEIDEL 1996, 235–243; VON RUMMEL 2007, 225–227.

<sup>13</sup> MAXFIELD 1981, 86–88; ADLER 2003, 131–137, 210–213; SPEIDEL 1996.

<sup>14</sup> ALFÖLDI 1935, 52–54; ENSSLIN 1942, 268–298; FRANK 1969, 160–162; MACCORMACK 1990, 194–196, 241–242; KOLB 2001, 100–102; VON RUMMEL 2007, 120–127.

ted representations, while none of them has collected all the sources referring to torcs in late Roman military contexts.<sup>15</sup> In the first part of my contribution I intend to focus on some newly identified torc-representations that have not previously been discussed in this context and on the problem of actual torc finds connected to the late Roman army. In the second part I attempt to classify torc-iconography briefly and to make a preliminary typochronology based on their representations.

## THE DECENNALIA BASE, ROMAN FORUM

A relief in the forum Romanum depicts the rite of the *suovetaurilia*, the latest representation in Roman state art. The monument is one of the column bases that celebrated Diocletian's *vota vicennalia* and Maximianus' triumph in A.D. 303.<sup>16</sup> The right-hand *papa*, with an axe over his shoulder, wears a collar with a disc-shaped pendant adorned with a bust (*Fig. 2*). H. P. L'Orange and S. Ryberg identified this as a *bullā*, in spite of their statement that this amulet "is an unusual detail that has no evident connection with the sacrifice".<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the pendant cannot be a *bullā*, because its wearer is neither a child, nor a woman.<sup>18</sup> The collar is circular, so the pendant hangs not from a leather strap or necklace, but is attached directly to a metal hoop.

The joint sacrifice of a bull, a sheep and a pig, offered only to Mars, was part of a traditional religious rite in the Roman army, the *lustratio exercitus*, which was carried out in connection with the lustration of camps or on the occasion of a triumph.<sup>19</sup> In late Roman times the ceremonies of periodic *vota* were regularly made to coincide with the celebration of a triumph and ended with a lustral rite.<sup>20</sup> That is why the scene was represented on a column base commemorating the *vota decennalia* of the Caesars. The *victimarii*, who executed the military rite of the *suovetaurilia*, were regular soldiers.<sup>21</sup> Some inscriptions prove that they served in legions, like C. Iulius Firminus in the XXX *Ulpia Victrix*,<sup>22</sup> or in the fleet, like L. Va-

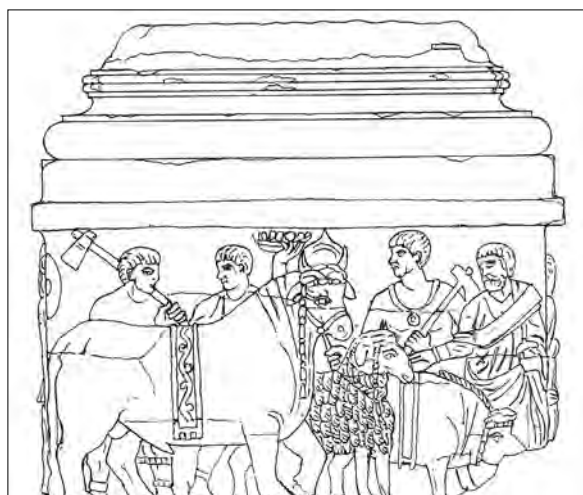


Fig. 2. The *suovetaurilia* scene of the Decennalia base in the Roman forum (after L'ORANGE 1938)

<sup>15</sup> WERDE 1972, 85–87; SPEIDEL 1996, 236–237; MARTIN 1999, 115–117; WALTER 2001, 181–186; ADLER 2003, 72.

<sup>16</sup> L'ORANGE 1938, 1–34; RYBERG 1955, 117.

<sup>17</sup> RYBERG 1955, 117.

<sup>18</sup> For the wearing of *bullae* in the Roman period, see: GOETTE 1986, 133–164; in the Pannonian provinces: MIGOTTI 2007, 187–219.

<sup>19</sup> DOMASZEWSKI 1893, 19–21.

<sup>20</sup> RYBERG 1955, 119.

<sup>21</sup> DOMASZEWSKI–DOBSON 1967, 14, 16, 19, 24, 27, 52; HAENSCH 2006, 209.

<sup>22</sup> CIL XIII 8292 (from the river Rhine near Cologne): C. Iulio Firmino | *victimario* | *mil(iti) leg(ionis) XXX U(lpiae) V(ictricis)* | *Agrip(inensi) stip(endiorum) XXVIII* | et | M. Aurelio Antiocho *mil(iti) leg(ionis) XXX U(lpiae) V(ictricis) h(eres) f(aciendum) c(uravit)* – see also: CIL VIII 18085 e 4 (*legio III Augusta*).



lerius Victor.<sup>23</sup> Besides the *laterculi* of the urban cohorts<sup>24</sup> and the *vigiles*,<sup>25</sup> *victimarii* are also listed in the *laterculi* of the imperial bodyguards, among the guardsmen of the praetorian cohorts<sup>26</sup> and the *equites singulares Augusti*.<sup>27</sup> Most probably these soldiers, as constant members of the imperial escort, carried out the sacrifices in the presence of emperors. After the army reforms of Diocletian, the rank of *victimarius* – or the scope of their duties – must have been preserved in the army of the Tetrarchy or at least in the bodyguard units of the *religiosissimi Augusti*, as Diocletian and Maximianus called themselves on a pagan sacral inscription.<sup>28</sup> According to the inscription of L. Valerius Victor, who was a *victimarius principalis*, the *victimarius* as a specialist belonged to the ranks of under-officers, the *milites principales*,<sup>29</sup> like the decorated rank of *torquatus* mentioned by Vegetius.<sup>30</sup> The preceding discussion makes it clear that the torc-wearer in the latest *suovetaurilia* relief may have been an under-officer of the Tetrarchic army, a *victimarius* and at the same time a *miles torquatus*, who earned his neckband in the emperor's service, most probably during his former career. He was obviously proud of having won a neckband, which was not a *bullla*, but an awarded torc with a rounded pendant, a form also known from later depictions. The human bust clearly recognizable at its centre can be identified with great certainty not as a specific deity, but as one of the current emperors, Diocletian or Maximianus. The image of the emperor in military dress is also engraved on the torc-gemstone of a guardsman in the Donation mosaic in San Vitale, Ravenna, depicting Justinian and his escort (Fig. 3).<sup>31</sup>

M. P. Speidel has previously supposed Constantine's Arch to have been the first known monument on which such neckbands are depicted,<sup>32</sup> but according to my argumentation this was rather the Tetrarchic column base in the Roman forum.

Another relief, which came to light in Merida, Spain, must belong to a triumphal monument, commemorating Maximianus' victory over the Franks and Moors in A.D. 296/297 (Fig. 4).<sup>33</sup> The relieved slab, dated around A.D. 300, depicts the emperor as a triumphal horseman, alongside a *tropaeum* with chain armour and, above it, a simple torc. On late imperial state reliefs the *tropaea* are often equipped with not only barbarian but also Roman *militaria*, as, for instance, on the contemporary votive column base in Rome. It cannot be excluded that the torc of the Merida relief is also a Roman, rather than a Frankish or Moorish neckband.

Some literary sources, mainly *passiones*, give further direct information about the significance of neckbands in the army of the Tetrarchs. Besides the well-known *Passio* of Saints Sergius and Bacchus,<sup>34</sup>



Fig. 3. Guardsmen of Justinian on the Donation mosaic of San Vitale, Ravenna

<sup>23</sup> CIL X 3501 = ILS 2875 (Misenum).

<sup>24</sup> CIL VI 32522 d 2. 8 (A.D. 209).

<sup>25</sup> CIL VI 1056, cf. p. 4320 (3) 11 (A.D. 205); CIL VI 1057, cf. p. 4320 (3) 4 (A.D. 205); CIL VI 1058, cf. p. 4320 (3) 14 (A.D. 210).

<sup>26</sup> CIL VI 32533, cf. p. 3834, 4351 (= ILS 431) b 24 (A.D. 209).

<sup>27</sup> CIL VI 31149 = ILS 4833 (A.D. 141).

<sup>28</sup> CIL III 4413 (Carnuntum); VORBECK 1980, 293.

<sup>29</sup> DOMASZEWSKI-DOBSON 1967, 14, 16, 19, 24, 27, 52; HAENSCH 2006, 209.

<sup>30</sup> WESCH-KLEIN 1994, 127; SPEIDEL 1996, 236.

<sup>31</sup> HAUCK 1959, 28–40.

<sup>32</sup> SPEIDEL 1996, 237–238.

<sup>33</sup> ARCE 1982, 359–371; ARCE 2008, 47–70.

<sup>34</sup> VAN DEN GHEYN 1895.



Fig. 4. Merida. Relief commemorating Maximianus' victory over the Franks and Moors in 296/297 (after ARCE 1982)



Fig. 5. Alsóheténypuszta (County of Tolna, Hungary), late Roman inner fortress. Lead seal of Constantius II, which was probably used as a signaculum on the collar of a late Roman soldier (Hungarian National Museum, photo: Zs. Mráv)

to its lead material, these objects could not be proper torcs, but special collars closed by a lead *signaculum*. Consequently, they must have been produced in large numbers and ought thus to be represented among the archaeological finds of the period. These characteristics can be observed only on a special series of late antique lead seals decorated with Christograms or with the emperor's portraits and name in the exergue (Fig. 5).

the *Acts of Maximilianus* deserve special attention.<sup>35</sup> During his enlistment, upon the order "*milita et accipe signaculum*" from the governor Dion, Maximilianus refused the *signaculum*, because "*iam habeo signum Christi Dei mei*" and "*ego Christianus sum, non licet plumbum collo portare*". These words clearly show that, during the rite of the *sacramentum militiae*, recruits were marked with a lead object worn around the neck, which – like the *candidati*-type torcs – probably featured the name and image of the emperor.<sup>36</sup> This may have been the religious grounds for Maximilianus' refusal to accept it. For practical reasons and owing

<sup>35</sup> RUINART 1859, 340–342 – cf. GÁSPÁR 1982, 66–68.

<sup>36</sup> DÖLGER 1930, 268–270 – cf. Ambr. De obit. Valent. 58 (PL. 16.1437. C.).

## THE GOLDEN MEDALS OF CONSTANTIUS II

Further iconographical evidence is provided by the reverse side of the Berlin golden medal issued by Constantius II, where the emperor is represented in his triumphal chariot flanked by two Victories (Fig. 6).<sup>37</sup> In the lower segment, among the *largitio* gifts, such as precious metal leaves, crowns and a money-bag in the centre, six obscure hoop-shaped golden objects can be seen, placed one over the other (Fig. 6b). An analogous depiction can be seen in the near-contemporary golden medal, now in the collection of the Hermitage, Saint Petersburg (Fig. 7).<sup>38</sup> The hoops, in this case appearing on the left side of the central money-bag, are very worn. The segment of the golden medal of Valens from the first Szilágysomlyó hoard (Fig. 8)<sup>39</sup> and a silver medal of Honorius (Fig. 9)<sup>40</sup> have a near-identical composition to that of the Berlin medal, but the wreaths and hoops are barely discernible, as a later replication simplified



Fig. 6. The Berlin golden medal issued by Constantius II (after GNECCHI 1912) photo: Zs. Mráv)



Fig. 7. The golden medal of Constantius II in the collection of the Hermitage, Saint Petersburg (after BANK 1986)



Fig. 8. The golden medal of Valens from the first Szilágysomlyó hoard (after SEIPEL [Hrsg.] 1999)



Fig. 9. The silver medal of Honorius (after GNECCHI 1912)



Fig. 10. The silver dish from Kerch depicting the triumph of Constantius II (after BANK 1986)

<sup>37</sup> GNECCHI 1912, 29 Constanzo II/4, Tav. 11.1 = COHEN 8/29. "al l'esergo armi e simboli fra le lettere A e N". It was kept in "Gabinetto di Francia", Berlin. Diameter.: 4,7 cm, weight: 40.300 g.– cf. DELBRÜCK 1929, 69 Abb. 25.

<sup>38</sup> GNECCHI 1912, 29 Constanzo II/2, Tav. 10.8 (diameter: 4,9 cm; weight: 41.900 g) – cf. BANK 1986, p. 272 fig. 9.

<sup>39</sup> GNECCHI 1912, 36. Valente/1, Tav. 15.1. = Cohen 1/1 – cf. Harhoiu 1993, 225 Nr. 8; Seipel 1999, 180–182, Kat. Nr. 7.

<sup>40</sup> For a silver medal of Honorius, see: Gneecchi 1912, 82 Onorio/1, Tav. 36.15 (Vienna) = Cohen 4/17.

them into flat rings. Nevertheless, let us return to the best-preserved Berlin medal in order to define these hitherto unexamined hoops: the flat regular rings have almost the same diameter as the wreaths, and in the middle of the frontal, lower curve, they are decorated with a round- or oval-shaped, bulged attachment. The two curves of the hoop ended in the middle of its open back with small spherical bulges. These characteristics correspond to the well-defined group of so-called *candidati*-type torcs, which are shaped as a complete circle and have a precious stone as decoration at the front, as depicted around the neck of the guardsman on the Kerch *largitio* bowl, dated to the reign of Constantius II (Fig. 10).<sup>41</sup> According to the theory proposed here, these hoops can be identified as golden torcs. The medals in question also testify beyond doubt that golden torcs were awarded by the emperor himself to soldiers of distinguished bravery and to new guardsmen, mainly on ceremonial occasions, such as triumphs or regnal anniversary feasts. Probably this ceremony or a later variation of it is mentioned in *De Ceremoniis* I,10, where a *protospatharius* knelt and kissed the emperor's feet, while a torc, ornamented with gems, was placed around his neck.<sup>42</sup>

### THE *LARGITIO* PLATE OF VALENTINIAN I OR II FROM GENEVA

The relief scene on the silver *largitio* plate of Valentinian I or II from Geneva, Switzerland, shows the emperor in military costume, flanked on either side by three soldiers from his escort (Fig. 11).<sup>43</sup> Although all the bodyguards in the scene are represented wearing torcs, as pointed out by Ph. von Rummel,<sup>44</sup> it is the lower section of the plate that provides the next piece of evidence. With the exception of three scholars, every discussion of this *largitio* plate has described only three military objects under the postament of the emperor: an oval shield, a long spatha with cross-piece and a helmet (Table 1).



Fig. 11. The *largitio* plate of Valentinian I or II from Geneva (after BARATTE 1989)

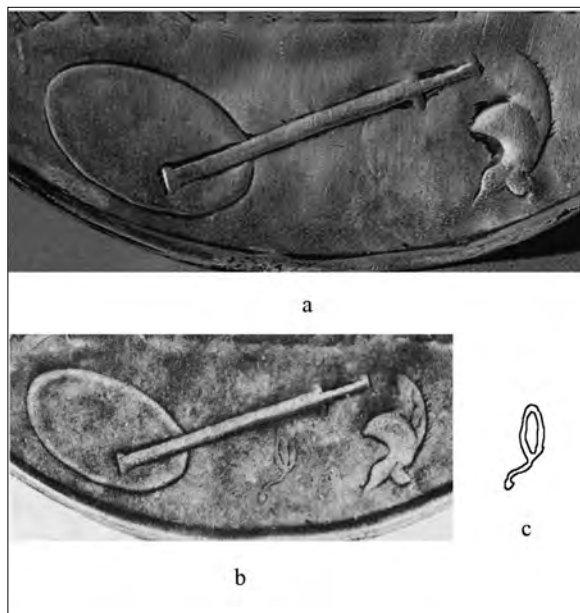


Fig. 12. The lower segment of the Geneva *largitio* plate depicting military symbols (a. after DELBRÜCK 1933; b. after BARATTE 1989) and the drawing of the enigmatic fourth object

<sup>41</sup> DELBRÜCK 1933, 147–151, Abb. 45–47, Taf. 57; BLANK 1986, p. 271 fig. 1 (with further literature).

<sup>42</sup> WALTER 2001, 183.

<sup>43</sup> DEONNA 1920, 18–32, 92–104; DEONNA 1921, 242–304; DELBRÜCK 1933, 179; GRÜNHAGEN 1954, 18;

<sup>44</sup> VON RUMMEL 2007, 348–349.



	The recognized objects in the lower segment by different scholars	The fourth item
W. Deonna (DEONNA 1920, 31.)	“Au bas de l’estrade on aperçoit les armes des vaincus, casque, bouclier, épée au fourreau muni de son ceinturon que termine un gland.”	belt
R. Delbrück (DELBRÜCK 1933, 181.)	“Im Segment, d. h. vor dem Suggestus, liegen Waffen; von links nach rechts folgen sich: ein Bogen, schwach aber deutlich; ein jetzt glatter ovaler Schild ohne Kennzeichen; ein langes, gerades Schwert mit schlichtem Griff, Gürtel und einem von dessen Schnalle (?) herabhängenden dünnen Riemen, der unten ein spitzkugeliges Gewicht zum Anfassen trägt; ein römischer Helm Wangenklappen...”	belt
M. Schulze (SCHULZE 1980, 60. Nr. 48.)	“Zu Füßen des Kaisers liegen seine Waffen: Schild, Speer und Helm”	–
S. MacCormack (MACCORMACK 1981, 205.)	“Beneath the podium are to be seen a shield, a baton and a helmet, tokens of the conquered enemy”.	–
F. Baratte (BARATTE 1989, 271-272. No. 236.)	“A l’exergue, un bouclier, une grande épée et un casque.”	–
C. Compostella (COMPOSTELLA 1990, 44.)	“Nell’esergo giacciono delle armi: un arco, uno scudo ovale privo di decorazioni, una spada, una cintura e un elmo con coprigiunzione.”	belt
A. Arbeiter (ARBEITER 1997, 158.)	“Kriegsgerät, nämlich ein Schild, ein Schwert und ein Helm, liegt auch in dem Segment zu Füßen der Gruppe.”	-
Ph. von Rummel (RUMMEL 2007, 349.)	“ ... zu Füßen des Kaisers seine Waffen, Helm, Schild und Schwert.”	-

Table 1. *Largitio* plate of Valentinian I or II from Geneva. The military objects under the postament of the emperor as described by different scholars

Some scholars, for instance M. Schulze<sup>45</sup> and Ph. von Rummel,<sup>46</sup> explained these militaria as the emperor’s own weaponry. This opinion can surely be excluded, as the emperor already had another and different type of sword in this period. Moreover, the helmet depicted is classified as an Intercisa type infantry helmet, worn in this scene by the guardsmen, which differs from the lavishly decorated, partially open battle helmet of late Roman emperors. S. MacCormack has supposed that the militaria were “tokens of the conquered enemy”,<sup>47</sup> but nevertheless the helmet surely represents a late Roman type.<sup>48</sup> In any case, in the lower segment of the plate, probably as a result of a former restoration or cleaning, only these three items are now visible (Fig. 12a). Surprisingly, in some old black-and-white photographs taken before its drastic cleaning, an additional enigmatic fourth object (Fig. 12b-c) can be clearly seen. Due to the current very worn and overpolished surface of the plate, almost nobody recognised this object. Only W. Deonna and R. Delbrück,<sup>49</sup> followed by C. Compostella, described and attempted to interpret it, in all cases as a military belt.<sup>50</sup> If we read the very detailed description by Delbrück, it becomes understandable why the object could not be defined as a belt, and besides there are no analogous pieces among 4<sup>th</sup>-century military belt-types. It is therefore more probable that the object in question is a torc. This view is supported by its size and diameter compared to the helmet,

<sup>45</sup> SCHULZE 1980, 60 Nr. 48.

<sup>46</sup> VON RUMMEL 2007, 349.

<sup>47</sup> MACCORMACK 1981, 205.

<sup>48</sup> MIKS 2008, 455–456 Abb. 6.

<sup>49</sup> DELBRÜCK 1933, 181.

<sup>50</sup> COMPOSTELLA 1990, 44.



Fig. 13. Venus from the so-called Projecta casket of the Esquiline Treasure (after KENT – PAINTER 1977)

which would be too small for a belt, but this identification is also confirmed by its form. A circular pendant attached to a neckband by a long chain or strap (?) is not without parallels in late Roman contexts. As a female jewel, for instance, it appears on a Venus from the so-called Projecta casket of the Esquiline Treasure.<sup>51</sup> (Fig. 13) More importantly, this type of torc can be clearly recognised in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, among the insignia of the *magister officiorum*.<sup>52</sup> The military objects depicted in the lower section include a white *dalmatica* with a similar type of torc around its neck (Fig. 14). It is also possible that the late Roman soldier represented in the *expositio thoracomachi* wears such a neckband (Fig. 15).<sup>53</sup> If my argumentation is correct, this would mean that, in the lower scene of the *largitio* plate, in addition to the depicted helmet, sword and shield, the torc becomes a fourth symbol of the status of a soldier or guardsman. In the *Passio* of Saints Sergius and Bacchus, the martyrs, as *primicerii* of Maximinus Daia's *schola gentilium*, refused to worship the gods, so they were stripped of their military insignia and their *maniakia* were removed.<sup>54</sup> Consequently they were often, though not always, represented wearing torcs. Since we lack any analogies, we should leave open the question whether the torc and the pendant suspended from it were the above-mentioned lead

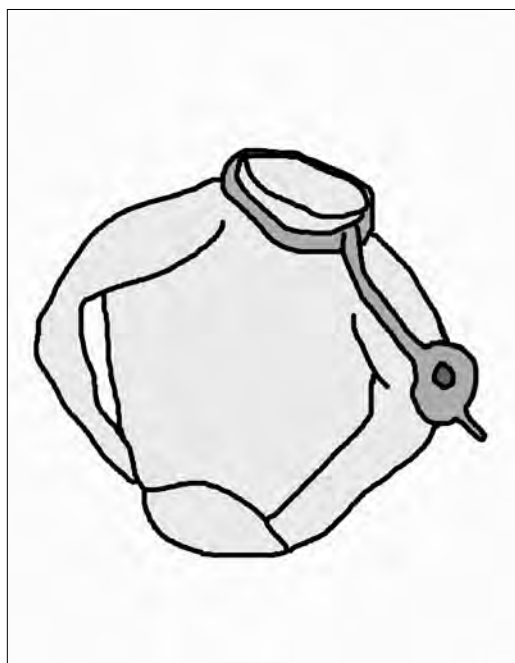
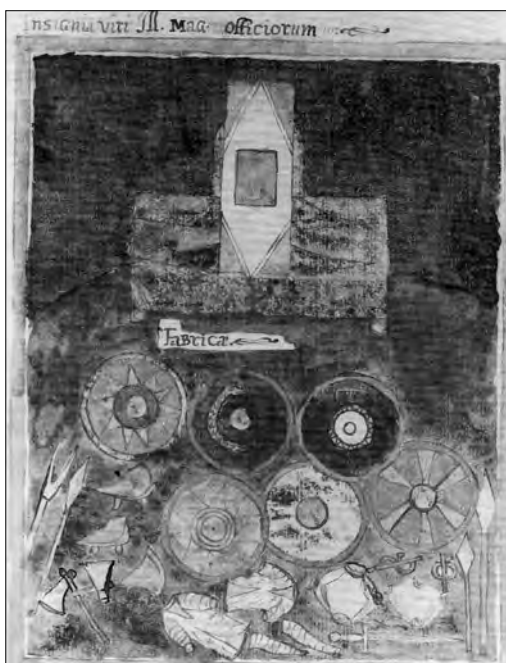


Fig. 14. *Notitia Dignitatum*, insignia of the *magister officiorum* (Ms. Landi 9 after Milano)

<sup>51</sup> KENT–PAINTER 1977, 44 n. 88.

<sup>52</sup> *NotDign.* insignia viri ill. mag. officiorum (Ms. Landi 9, f.13r, f.67r. Piacenza, Bibliotheca Comunale Passerini Landi.) – cf. Milano 39–40 n. 1c.1c.

<sup>53</sup> For the representation of the *expositio thoracomachi* in an early medieval edition of Anonymus, *De rebus bellicis* (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), see MACDOWA–EMBLETON 1994, 45. – cf. UBL 2006, 270–272; SUMNER 2009, 171–174.

<sup>54</sup> VAN DEN GHEYN 1895, 371–395 – cf. WALTER 2001, 183–184; WALTER 2003, 153–155.

*signaculum* received by Roman soldiers during the rite of the *sacramentum militiae* or rather a new type of golden torcs given as awards.

Finally, some hitherto unrecognized examples should be briefly noted. In the Cambridge drawings of the base of the destroyed Column of Arcadius in Constantinople, specifically on its southern face, to the right of the emperors' escort, stand two soldiers depicted wearing torcs with a single gemstone (Fig. 16.a-b).<sup>55</sup> The artist who drew this must have clearly seen this object around the neck of the soldiers, who were most probably serving in the imperial bodyguard. On an inscribed funerary slab from Aquileia, three engraved figures demonstrate the life cycle of the soldier (Fig. 17).

The first figure represents him as a soldier in full armament, wearing a torc with toothed leaf-shaped pendant: this is not surprising, since the inscription tells us that he was an *ex-protector*, a discharged guardsman.<sup>56</sup>

The torc-types that appear in different representations correspond to the torcs described in the literary sources. The surface of the hoop is either twisted, as on Constantine's Arch<sup>57</sup> and the torc described by Pseudo-Codinus (*De Officiis* 184), or more often flat. The so-called *candidati*-type torcs were made of gold and adorned with jewels at the front.<sup>58</sup> This type can be classified into two main groups. To the first subtype belonged the torcs with inlaid and/or attached gemstones decorated often with the image

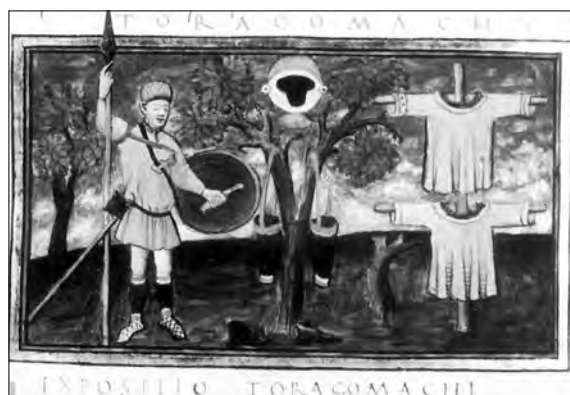


Fig. 15. The *expositio thoracomachi* in an early medieval edition of Anonymous, *De rebus bellicis* (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris – after MACDOWAL – EMBLETON 1994)

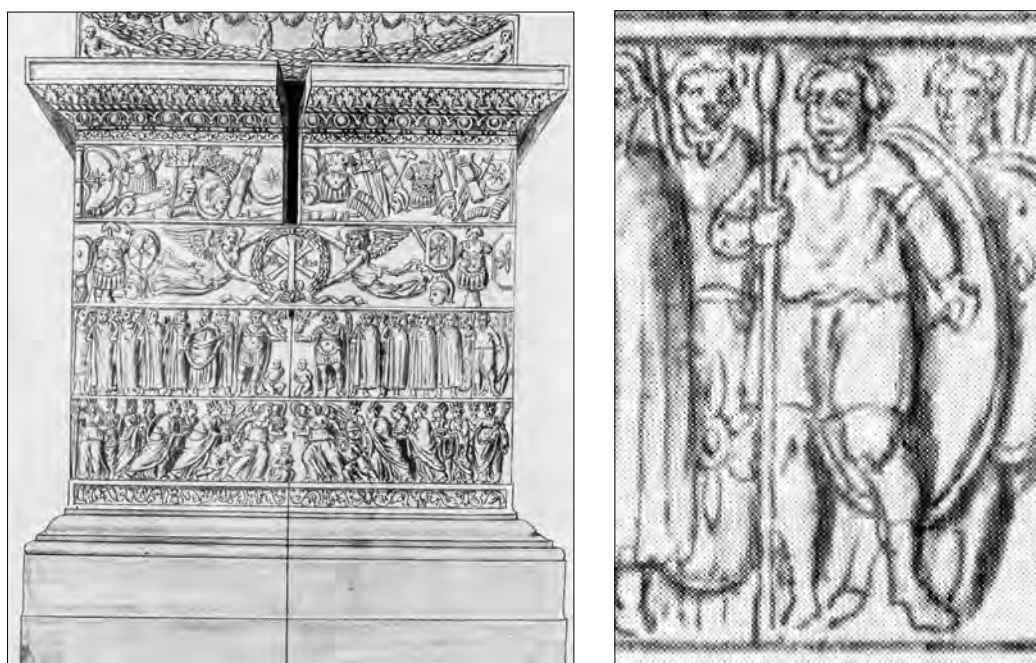


Fig. 16 a. 16<sup>th</sup>-century drawing of the destroyed Column of Arcadius in Constantinople; b. soldiers wearing torcs (after FRESHFIELD 1921-1922)

<sup>55</sup> FRESHFIELD 1921-1922, Taf. 17; KOLLWITZ 1941, Beilag. 5.

<sup>56</sup> AE 1982, 383 = AE 1991, 772 = InscrAq 2913 –cf. SPEIDEL 1990, 68-72; VERGONE 2007, 291-295 n. 139 (with further literature).

<sup>57</sup> SPEIDEL 1996, 237-239 Fig. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Zonaras 13, 10 – cf. SPEIDEL 1996, 238-239.



Fig. 17. An inscribed funerary slab from Aquileia depicting an *ex-protector* with torc looped around his neck (after VERGONE 2007)

of the current emperor (Typ I) (Fig. 18). A golden 4<sup>th</sup>-century neckband, with five inlaid precious stones of glass paste in the Centraal Museum, Utrecht (Fig. 19), may belong to this group.<sup>59</sup> Based on its inscription, it was probably made in an imperial workshop.<sup>60</sup> The earliest-represented examples show a single circular, oval or rhombic precious stone or glass paste at the middle of the frontal side (Typ. I.2a-d).<sup>61</sup> This basic form of torc was partly taken up from Roman private, mostly female jewellery<sup>62</sup> or less probably as an eastern influence from the iconography of Palmyrene deities. These torc-wearing deities were often represented as Roman soldiers or officers in military costume after the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.<sup>63</sup> Later, in the early Byzantine period, torcs ornamented with three or five jewels appear in the literary sources and in representations (Typ I.3a-b).<sup>64</sup> The latest type had a larger central stone (or a golden medal?) and four additional but smaller stones (or coins in clustered construction?<sup>65</sup>) attached to it in a transversal position (Typ. I.4a-b),<sup>66</sup> like the golden coins on the two gold bracelets of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (Fig. 20).<sup>67</sup> These large bracelets could have been wristbands (*bracchialia*),

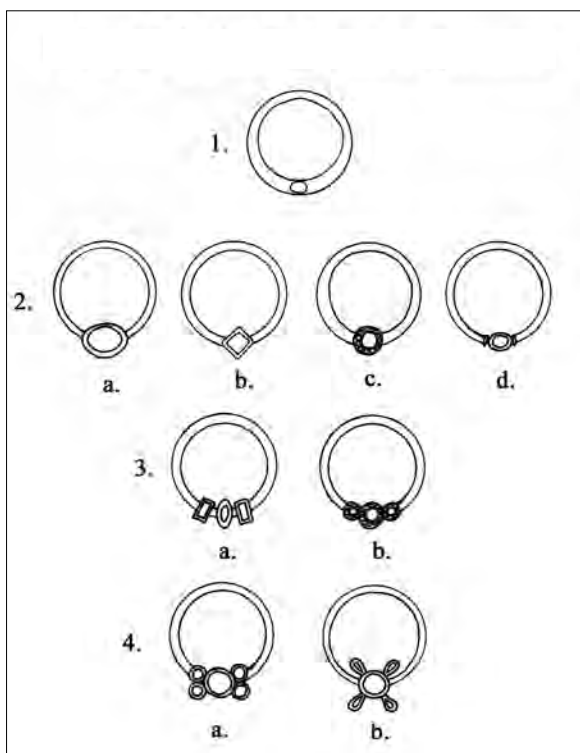


Fig. 18. Torcs with inlaid and/or attached gemstone (Typ I) (drawing Zs. Mráv)

<sup>59</sup> ROES 1947, 183–187 fig. 4–5; SPEIDEL 1996, 239 n. 23.

<sup>60</sup> SPEIDEL 1996, 239 n. 23.

<sup>61</sup> For the Type I.1 see, for instance, the torc of the guardsmen on the silver dish from Kerch representing the triumph of Constantius II: KENT-PAINTER 1977, 25 n. 11; BLANK 1986, 271 fig. 1. Torcs of Typ I.2a (with single, oval-shaped jewel): San Vitale in Ravenna, Donation mosaic: HAUCK 1959, 28–40. Typ. I.2b (with rhombic jewel): votive mosaic portrait of Saint Sergius wearing a torc in Saint Demetrius, Thessaloniki: CORMACK 1989, II n. 40. Typ I.2.c: Theodosius *missorium*, Madrid: MEISCHNER 1996, 389–432.

<sup>62</sup> See note 78.

<sup>63</sup> See, for instance, the three Palmyrene deities (Malakbel, Aglibol with the god Baalshamin) in the Bir Wereb relief (Louvre, Paris): DRIJVERS 1976, Pl. XXXIV.

<sup>64</sup> Typ I.3a: icon representing Saint Sergius and Bacchus from Saint Catherine's Monastery, Sinai (now in Kiev): BLANK 1986, 291 fig. 112–113. Typ I.3b: The *Homilies* of Gregory of Nazianzus, *Paris graec.* 510, f. 374v (Julian is represented sacrificing to the pagan gods, while behind him can be seen some soldiers of his bodyguard unit) – cf. WALTER 2001, 183.

<sup>65</sup> BRUHN 1993, 30.

<sup>66</sup> Saint Sergius silver bowl, Cyprus: KENT-PAINTER 1977, Cat. n. 175, p. 69; Vienna *Genesis*, f. 18v. (miniature of Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dreams): GERSTINGER no date, Pl. 36; WALTER 2001, 182.

<sup>67</sup> ROSS 1965, 44–46 n. 46 Pl. XXXVII – cf. BRUHN 1993, 30. For the pair of gold bracelets set with coin imitations from Assiūd, Egypt, see: GREIFENHAGEN 1970, 71 Taf. 52.5–6.



Fig. 19. The 4<sup>th</sup>-century golden neckband with five inlaid precious stones of glass paste in the Centraal Museum, Utrecht (after ROES 1947)



Fig. 20. Gold bracelet from the Dumbarton Oaks Collection (after HENDY – BELLINGER 1999)

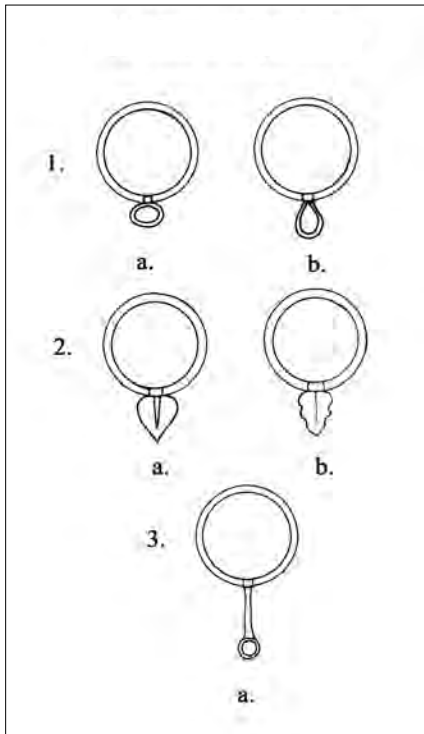


Fig. 21. Torc with pendants (Typ II) (drawing Zs. Mráv)



Fig. 22. The late Roman golden torc in the British Museum (after MACDOWAL – EMBLETON 1994)

which became late Roman and early Byzantine battle awards and were also worn by under-officers, who were ranked as *bracchiati*.<sup>68</sup>

The second group comprises neckbands with different shapes of pendants suspended from them (Fig. 21). A golden torc from the British Museum must have belonged to this group (Fig. 22).<sup>69</sup> It was quite certainly a late Roman military decoration, since it follows the tradition of the earlier *dona militaria* insofar as the two ends of the band end in a lion's head.<sup>70</sup> The hoops, clearly visible at the front, served for fastening a hinged, now lost pendant, which were never attached to the torcs awarded in the first two centuries. Circular, oval and drop-shaped pendants are common forms (Typ II.1a-b).<sup>71</sup> The circular pendants, or at least some of them, could have been gold coins or medals with (openwork?) settings.<sup>72</sup> In addition to the above-mentioned tombstone

<sup>68</sup> SPEIDEL 1996, 241–242.

<sup>69</sup> MACDOWAL–EMBLETON 1994, 17.

<sup>70</sup> GARBSCH 1986, 336; GRABERT–KOCH 1986, 325–336; SPRINGER 1993, 265–271 – cf. ADLER 2003, 210–213.

<sup>71</sup> Typ II.1a (torcs with oval/circular-shaped pendants): Welschbillig, Germanic guardsmen: Wrede 1972, 85–87, Taf. 34.1, 35.1, 36.1, 37.2, 38, 39.1–2, 41.1; Typ II.1b (torcs with drop-shaped pendants): Diptychon (München, Staatsbibliothek): DELBRÜCK 1929, 180–185 Nr. 45.

<sup>72</sup> BRUHN 1993, 30; MARTIN 1999, 115–117.



Fig. 23. The Theodosian obelisk base in Constantinople, Roman guardsmen with torcs (after BRUNS 1935)

from Aquileia,<sup>73</sup> the leaf-shaped torcs are known from other Theodosian monuments: from the obelisk base in Constantinople (Fig. 23)<sup>74</sup> and on some *hermae* representing African guardsmen from Welschbillig (Fig. 24)<sup>75</sup> (Typ II.2a-b). It is commonly argued that these leaves may have been ivy leaves, but in my opinion they are peony leaves, which had imperial purple-coloured flowers and were in Greek called *theodonion*.<sup>76</sup> This word has a similar meaning to the name of Theodosios, and consequently the soldiers in the bodyguard of Theodosios were indirectly marked with the name of the emperor - but, of course, this theory is hardly provable. More probably the leaf-shaped pendants of the torcs imitated a popular late Roman pendant-type, which is exemplified by a silver neckband with large leaf-shaped pendant decorated with a Christogram, found in a child's sarcophagus in Carnuntum (Fig. 25).<sup>77</sup>

The different types of torcs could also have been worn as personal jewels in the Roman Empire by women, children and slaves,<sup>78</sup> as well as youths.<sup>79</sup> The form of



Fig. 24. *Hermae* representing African guardsmen from Welschbillig (after WREDE 1972)

<sup>73</sup> VERGONE 2007, 291–295 n. 139.

<sup>74</sup> BRUNS 1935, 45 Abb. 44, 46–48, 62, 64–67, 77, 83.

<sup>75</sup> WREDE 1972, Taf. 38.1–2.

<sup>76</sup> Dictionnaire classique d'histoire naturelle. Tom. 16. Paris 1830, 223.

<sup>77</sup> KANDLER 2004, 61–62 Abb. 45. A grave of a child from the Ságvár 4<sup>th</sup>-century cemetery (n. 219) yielded a similar torc with leaf-shaped pendant: BURGER 1966, 122, 218.

<sup>78</sup> WREDE 1972, Taf. 53.4; BRUHN 1993; WALKER–BIERBRIER 1997, n. 90; YEROULANOU 1999, 31–42.

<sup>79</sup> WALTER 2001, 181.

these collars, often adorned with pendants, strongly resembles the torcs that were used in the late Roman army (Fig. 26). We can therefore conclude that the origin of the shape and form of the known military torcs was not Germanic, but purely Roman. The Roman emperors, beyond doubt, awarded to their brave soldiers and guardsmen only the previously described Roman types of torcs made in imperial workshops, and not Germanic types, as is clearly shown by the Berlin medal of Constantius II (Fig. 6). Consequently, the torcs of non-Roman decoration or technique – for instance, the neckbands from the princely burials at Gommern,<sup>80</sup> Hassleben, Ostrovany/Osztrópataka,<sup>81</sup> Cejkov/Czéke,<sup>82</sup> and Wrocław/Zakrów I and III<sup>83</sup> – can hardly be explained as imperial gifts or Roman military decorations. This view is also supported by the conclusion of von Rummel's monograph, *Habitus Barbarus*,<sup>84</sup> that the long-haired late Roman guardsmen with torcs looped around their necks are likely to be representations of Roman elite soldiers rather than hostile or allied barbarian warriors.<sup>85</sup>

Fig. 25. Silver neckband with a large leaf-pendant decorated with a Christogram from a child's sarcophagus in Carnuntum (after KANDLER 2004)

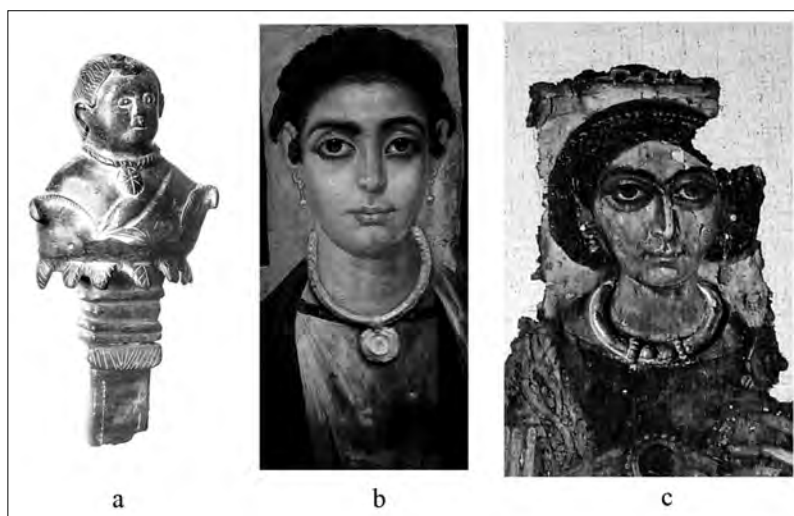


Fig. 26 a. Child wearing a torc with pendant, finial of a tripod leg from Trier (after WREDE 1972); b. Torc with pendant, mummy portrait from Fayum (after BRUHN 1993); c. Funerary portrait from Fayum (Paris, Musée du Louvre, AF 6487 – after YEROULANOU 1999)

<sup>80</sup> BECKER 2001, 129–130.

<sup>81</sup> PROHÁSZKA 2006, 43–46, 66–68.

<sup>82</sup> BENINGER 1931, Taf. 8.

<sup>83</sup> GREMPER 1887, Taf. V.21; id.: 1888, Taf. VII.14.

<sup>84</sup> RUMMEL 2007, 230–231.

<sup>85</sup> I am indebted to Philip Rance and András Szabó for improving my English.



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